

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /023 W  
-----079383 221718Z /50

P 221644Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7407  
USICA WASHDC PRIORITY  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
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EO 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: AMERICAN FILM WEEK IN GDR

REF: BERLIN 2931 (NOTAL)

1. AN EIGHT-DAY FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN FILMS, THE FIRST  
EVER HELD IN THE GDR, OPENED IN LEIPZIG ON MAY 18 AT  
THE 1100-SEAT CAPITOL THEATRE TO A FULL HOUSE, AND AS  
OF MAY 19 WILL RUN CONCURRENTLY IN TWO OTHER CITIES,  
ERFURT AND HALLE. THE OFFICIAL CEREMONY INCLUDED  
SPEECHES BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE HORST PEHNERT  
AND AMBASSADOR BOLEN. PEHNERT SPOKE OF THE IMPORTANCE  
OF AMERICAN FILMS TO THE MOTION PICTURE ART AND OF  
THEIR POPULARITY IN THE GDR, ALLUDED TO THE DEVELOPING  
CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND PLACED THE EVENT  
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT. AMBASSADOR  
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BOLEN DESCRIBED THE FILM WEEKS IN THREE CITIES AS A MAJOR  
STEP FORWARD IN INCREASING COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTAND-  
ING BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES, REVIEWED OTHER  
CULTURAL EXCHANGES IN PROGRESS, DESCRIBED THE  
GENRE-FILMS TO BE SHOWN AS REPRESENTING VARIOUS ASPECTS  
OF AMERICAN SOCIETY AND OF AMERICAN ARTISTIC CREATIVITY,  
AND CONCLUDED WITH A TRIBUTE TO CHARLIE CHAPLIN, A SCREEN-

ING OF WHOSE "MODERN TIMES" THEN FOLLOWED. NEVER SHOWN IN THE GDR, CHAPLIN'S 46-YEAR OLD FILM HAD THE AUDIENCE LAUGHING AND APPLAUDING THROUGHOUT.

2. THE PERFORMANCE WAS FOLLOWED BY A RECEPTION IN THE TOWER-RESTAURANT OF KARL MARX UNIVERSITY, A 30-STORY CONTEMPORARY STRUCTURE, AND WAS ATTENDED BY OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, VARIOUS BRANCHES OF THE GDR FILM INDUSTRY AND PROGRESS-FILMVERLEIH, WHICH HAD BEEN THE WORKING PARTNER FOR OVER ONE YEAR WITH THE EMBASSY'S P&C SECTION, AND MANY CULTURAL PERSONALITIES FROM THE CITY OF LEIPZIG HEADED BY ITS TOP CULTURAL OFFICIAL, STADTRAT RUDI GEHRKE. THE LAVISH BUFFET WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY A LARGE RED CONFECTIONARY PANEL CENTRE-PIECE ON WHICH WAS WRITTEN IN WHITE LETTERS - "TAGE DES USA-FILMS IN DER DDR."

3. WHILE PEHNERT AND OTHER OFFICIALS MADE SEVERAL REFERENCES TO THE ABSENCE OF A US FILM DELEGATION, THERE WAS ALSO APPRECIATION FOR THE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ONE, AND FOR THE EXPLANATION THAT NO STARS SEEMED TO BE FILMING IN EUROPE AT THE PRESENT TIME AND THAT TRAVEL COSTS FROM THE U.S. TO THE GDR WERE PROHIBITIVE. OTHER REFERENCES AS WELL AS TOASTS WERE MADE TO THE "GDR FILM DAYS IN THE USA" AND PROMISES EXTRACTED OF ASSISTANCE FROM ICA IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WASHINGTON.

4. THE ONLY DISAPPOINTMENT WAS THE LAST-MINUTE REFUSAL BY MGM TO RELEASE A PRINT OF "2001 - A SPACE ODYSSEY," EVEN THOUGH ITS INCLUSION IN THE FILM WEEK HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR OVER ONE YEAR BY ALL RESPONSIBLE PARTIES, THE MPAA IN WASHINGTON AND PARIS, THE WEST GERMAN DISTRIBUTORS, AND ICA. DESPITE STANLEY KUBRICK'S APPROVAL AND JACK VALENTI'S INTERVENTION, MGM PRESIDENT ROSENFELD WAS ADAMANT, AS A CONSEQUENCE OF WHICH THE FILM WEEK LOST ITS ONLY SCIENCE-FICTION ENTRY, FOR WHICH NO SUITABLE REPLACEMENT COULD BE SUPPLIED, EVEN THOUGH NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUED RIGHT DOWN TO THE HOUR OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING.

5. PUBLICITY FOR THE FILM WEEK -EGAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE PREMIERE WITH A COMPREHENSIVE STORY IN "NEUES DEUTSCHLAND" AND IN THE PROVINCIAL PRESS, FOLLOWED BY SHORTER STORIES THE DAY AFTER THE OPENING MENTIONING THE AMBASSADOR'S PRESENCE AND THE CHAPLIN FILM. MEANWHILE, THE THREE FILM-WEEK CITIES WERE PLACARDED WITH A RED-WHITE-BLUE POSTER FEATURING THE LETTERS "USA." COPIES OF ICA'S

"1893" BROCHURE WERE DISTRIBUTED AT THE OPENING, AS WELL AS AN EIGHT-PAGE BROCHURE PRINTED BY PROGRESS-FILM WHICH CONTAINS REMARKS BY PEHNERT AND BY AMBASSADOR BOLEN, STILLS AND SUMMARIES OF THE SIX FILMS, AND CONCLUDES WITH A THREE-PAGE DISCUSSION OF THE FILMS BY A GDR CRITIC VERY MUCH ALONG IDEOLOGICAL LINES. THE SAME CRITIC REVIEWS THE LEIPZIG OPENING IN THE WEEKEND EDITION OF "NEUES DEUTSCHLAND" AND PROVIDES THE SAME IDEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION TO ALL THE FILMS.

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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7408  
USICA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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6. MEANWHILE, RIAS'S FILM CIRITC HEINZ KERSTEN BROADCAST AN EXCELLENT ACCOUNT OF THE FILM WEEK ENTRIES AND PLACED THE EVENT IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND GDR, ALSO SUMMARIZING THE OTHER CULTURAL EVENTS TAKING PLACE IN BOTH THE GDR AND THE US.

7. EACH FILM WILL BE SHOWN THREE TIMES DAILY IN ALL THREE CITIES. THREE EMBASSY OFFICERS ARE ON SITE IN EACH CITY AND WILL REMAIN THROUGHOUT THE EVENT. A CONSOLIDATED REPORT WILL BE CABLED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE FILM WEEK.

ALEXANDER

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## Message Attributes

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